

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUEBEC 00079 092300Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SOE-02 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 DOE-11 H-02 INR-10 INT-05
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-05 USIA-15 OES-07
SP-02 SS-15 STR-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 /129 W
-----042726 092302Z /75

P 092230Z MAR 78
FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1271
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY
AMCONSUL MONTREAL PRIORITY
AMCONSUL HALIFAX

UNCLAS QUEBEC 0079

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, CA, ENRG
SUBJECT: QUEBEC - NEWFOUNDLAND ENERGY NEGOTIATIONS

1. QUEBEC PREMIER, RENE LEVESQUE, WILL LEAD DELEGATION TO NEWFOUNDLAND MARCH 10 - 11 FOR DISCUSSIONS AIMED AT RESOLVING LONG STANDING DISPUTE BETWEEN TWO PROVINCES OVER EXPLOITATION OF LABORADOR HYDRO-ELECTRIC RESOURCES AND, IN PARTICULAR, THE PRICE QUEBEC PAYS FOR POWER FROM CHURCHILL FALLS. OBSERVERS IN QUEBEC ARE PREDICTING AT LEAST PRELIMINARY AGREEMENT WILL BE REACHED OVER WEEKEND BETWEEN LEVESQUE AND NEWFOUNDLAND PREMIER MOORE. LEVESQUE NEEDS DEMONSTRATE VIABILITY OF HIS SOVEREIGNTY ASSOCIATION FORMULA BY REACHING AGREEMENT WITH ANOTHER CANADIAN PROVINCE ON IMPORTANT ECONOMIC ISSUE. SINCE QUEBEC HAS BEEN GETTING CHURCHILL POWER AT BARGAIN PRICES, IT IS ASSUMED LEVESQUE CAN AFFORD MAKE RELATIVELY GENEROUS SETTLEMENT WITH POOREST NEIGHBOR WITHOUT QUEBEC SUFFERING GRAVE ECONOMIC DAMAGE. SOME SUGGEST FORMULA FOR GRADUAL PRICE RISE MAY BE WORKED OUT PHASED TO JAMES BAY POWER COMING ONTO QUEBEC GRIDS. CONFLICTING CLAIMS TO POTENTIAL HYDRO-ELECTRIC RESOURCES IN LABORADOR-
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NORTHERN QUEBEC MAY BE MORE DIFFICULT TO RESOLVE.

2. COMMENT: MINISTER OF ENERGY JORAN HAS BEEN NEGOTIATING QUIETLY FOR OVER A YEAR WITH HIS NEWFOUNDLAND COUNTERPARTS. WE SUSPECT HE MAY HAVE ALREADY WORKED OUT BASIS FOR AGREEMENT WHICH PREMIERS COULD PUT THEIR CHOPS ON OVER NEXT WEEKEND WITH ADVANTAGES FOR BOTH SIDES. MCNAMARA

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